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# CIDS

## County Information and Data Service

*Published weekly by: County Commissioners Association of Ohio*

209 East State Street • Columbus, Ohio 43215-4309  
Phone: 614-221-5627 • Fax: 614-221-6986 • www.ccao.org

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VOLUME XXXXVIII

NO. 21

JUNE 4, 2010

### DATES TO REMEMBER

JUNE 9, 2010	PLANNING FOR FUTURE COUNTY FACILITY NEEDS – 2 <sup>ND</sup> WEDNESDAY SEMINAR SERIES, CCAO OFFICES, COLUMBUS
JUNE 10, 2010	CCAO BOARD OF TRUSTEES, CCAO OFFICES, COLUMBUS
JUNE 11, 2010	CCAO/CEAO SUMMER SEMINAR, DOUBLETREE COLUMBUS WORTHINGTON HOTEL, FRANKLIN COUNTY (COLUMBUS)
JULY 16-20, 2010	NACo ANNUAL CONFERENCE, RENO/SPARKS CONVENTION CENTER, RENO/WASHOIE COUNTY (RENO), NV
JUNE 25, 2010	CCC/EAPA REGIONAL MEETING, WARREN COUNTY ENGINEER'S OFFICE, WARREN COUNTY (LEBANON)
JULY 30, 2010	CCC/EAPA REGIONAL MEETING, MOHRE'S, WILLIAMS COUNTY (BRYAN)

### ASSOCIATION NEWS

#### CCAO/CEAO SUMMER SEMINAR TO BE HELD JUNE 11; LET'S GO OUT TO THE COLUMBUS CLIPPERS BASEBALL GAME!

Franklin County Commissioners Paula Brooks, Marilyn Brown, and John O'Grady and County Engineer Dean Ringle cordially invite all county commissioners, engineers, affiliates and guests to the **CCAO/CEAO Summer Seminar** to be held **June 11, 2010**. Meetings will be held at the **Doubletree Hotel Columbus/Worthington**, 175 Hutchinson Avenue, in Columbus. The following affiliate organizations will be meeting during the seminar: County Administrators Association, County Commissioners Clerks and Engineers Administrative Professionals Association, County Facility Managers Association, and County Purchasing Association. **The County Purchasing Association will not be meeting at the seminar.**

CCAO/CEAO seminar topics include:

- Wind Turbines & the Like: What Local Governments Should Be Prepared For
- Sexual Harassment in the Workplace: a Mock Trial Outlining the Impacts on Employers

- FAQ's from the HR Hotline
- Professionalism PLUS
- Through the Looking Glass: Ohio in 2011 – A Media Panel

In response to requests from counties, CCAO/CEAO has changed the format of the traditional two-day summer conference to a one-day seminar. All conference educational sessions will take place on Friday, June 11. Registration will open at 8:00 a.m. with sessions beginning at 9:00 a.m. and ending at 4:00 p.m. There will be one registration fee for all attendees that will include conference registration, continental breakfast, beverage breaks, and lunch. Registration information is posted at [www.ccao.org](http://www.ccao.org). An updated program is attached.

Optional Activity: Seminar registrants arriving the evening before the seminar on Thursday, **June 10** have the opportunity to attend the **Columbus Clippers v. Rochester Red Wings baseball game** at the beautiful, new Huntington Park. The gates open at 5:30 p.m. Food will be available at 6:00 p.m. with the game starting at 7:05 p.m. Register for tickets on the conference registration form.

### PLANNING FOR FUTURE COUNTY FACILITY NEEDS; 2<sup>ND</sup> WEDNESDAY'S SEMINAR – JUNE 9

CCAO will be hosting "Planning for Future County Facility Needs" – the third in a series of "Second Wednesday's" seminars – on Wednesday, June 9 at the CCAO Offices, 209 East State Street, in Columbus.

In a time of declining resources and increased public demand for services, county building improvements must be carefully planned in order to be completed on time and under budget. Whether county commissioners are planning new construction or merely trying to make better use of existing space, careful analysis of facility capacity and use is essential. During challenging economic conditions county officials may seek cost savings through operational efficiencies. One area for operational efficiency that is often overlooked is the potential for improved efficiency through better use of office space and buildings. This program will provide an opportunity for county commissioners, administrators, and facility managers to learn about the most innovative techniques to evaluate and improve facility utilization and reduce public costs.

The seminar will begin sharply at 9:30 a.m. and will conclude promptly at 12:30 p.m. Registrations will be accepted only by email. Seminar information is attached to this issue of CIDS and is posted on our website at [www.ccao.org](http://www.ccao.org). Coffee will be served during the morning and lunch will be on your own. Best of all, no registration fee will be charged! To register, contact Janet Erwin, CCAO Administrative Assistant, at [jerwin@ccao.org](mailto:jerwin@ccao.org).

### CCAO COMMITTEE TO REVIEW BYLAWS

Under the CCAO Code of Regulations, commonly referred to as the Bylaws, a committee is required to review the Bylaws every five years. CCAO President Paula Brooks has appointed a committee to review the Bylaws co-chaired by Tuscarawas County Commissioner Kerry Metzger and Lorain County Commissioner Ted Kalo. Other members of the committee include Daniel Troy (Lake), Doug Corcoran (Ross), Penny Traina (Columbiana), Marilyn Reid (Greene), and Ed Humphrey (Clermont). The first meeting of the Committee will take place on June 10. The last amendments to the Bylaws was in 2000. The Committee is asking for input from the members of any suggested changes from any county commissioner. A copy of the CCAO Bylaws is available on the CCAO web site at <http://www.ccao.org/LinkClick.aspx?link=Downloads%2fbylaws.pdf&tabid=156&mid=497&language=en-US>. Any commissioner that has suggestions are encouraged to send the suggestions to Kathy Dillon at CCAO, [kathydillon@ccao.org](mailto:kathydillon@ccao.org) or to contact any member of the committee.

## **AFFILIATE NEWS**

### 2010 CCC/EAPA REGIONAL MEETINGS

The County Commissioners' Clerks and Engineer's Administrative Professional Association of Ohio (CCC/EAPA) has scheduled regional meetings to share information and network with other clerks. CCC/EAPA is comprised of county commissioners and engineers' office staff. All commissioners' clerks and engineers' administrative professionals are welcome to network with this most informative organization. The board works hard to provide educational workshops and training opportunities at summer and winter conferences.

Regional information and networking luncheon meetings are a priority with CCC/EAPA. Topics will vary at each meeting and are held on Friday's beginning at 10:00 a.m. until 2:30 p.m. CCAO/CEAO sponsors the lunch.

The first meeting location has been announced. Additional meeting locations will be announced in future issues of CIDS and at [www.ccao.org](http://www.ccao.org).

- **June 25 – Warren County** – Warren County Engineer's Office, 105 Markey Road, Lebanon, OH 45036-9779
- **July 30 – Williams County** - Mohre's, 139 West Butler, Bryan, OH 43506
- **August 27 – Athens County**
- **September 24 – Franklin County**
- **October 22 – Tuscarawas County**

Please email suggestions for agenda items to Carolyn Hauenstein, Clerk, and Erie County Commissioners at [chauenstein@eriecounty.oh.gov](mailto:chauenstein@eriecounty.oh.gov) or Lisa Hawkins, Clerk, Ashtabula County Commissioners at [llhawkins@ashtabulacounty.us](mailto:llhawkins@ashtabulacounty.us). Bring any forms to share that may be useful to other counties.

To obtain additional information on the CCC/EAPA, or if you are interested in serving on one of the committees, please contact Bonnie Green, System Administrator, Lake County Engineer's Office, at (440) 350-2770, [bonnie.green@lakecountyohio.gov](mailto:bonnie.green@lakecountyohio.gov) or [www.ccc-esao.org](http://www.ccc-esao.org).

## **COUNTY ACVITIVIES**

### FAYETTE COUNTY EMA DIRECTOR INDUCTED INTO SENIOR CITIZENS HALL OF FAME

Fulton Terry, Fayette County Emergency Management Agency director since 1993, was one of 12 individuals who were inducted in the 35<sup>th</sup> Annual Central Ohio Senior Citizens Hall of Fame on May 19. The Ceremony was conducted by the Central Ohio Area on Aging. Terry was nominated by the Kiwanis Club of Washington Court House for his extensive service to the county and his fellow man, particularly in the area of safety. Throughout the years, Terry has worked in many organizations in Fayette County, including the Washington Court House Police Department, Ohio Department of Transportation, Fayette County Engineer's Office, and 35 years as a call volunteer firefighter with the Washington Court House Fire Department.

### U.S. SMALL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION RECOGNIZES HORIZON CERTIFIED DEVELOPMENT COMPANY AS TOP CERTIFIED DEVELOPMENT COMPANY IN COLUMBUS DISTRICT

Horizon Certified Development Company (HCDC), the lending arm of Hamilton County Development Co., Inc., was recognized by the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) Columbus District Office as the number one Certified Development Company (CDC) for 2009 at its Annual Small Business Awards Ceremony on May 19. Out of the 15 CDC's in Ohio, HCDC received this award for having highest SBA 504 Loan volume in the

Columbus District, with 35 loan approvals totaling nearly \$18 million in financing that leveraged \$44 million in small business investment. These companies also project the creation of 250 new jobs.

The SBA 504 Loan Program is the Small Business Administration economic development lending program for small businesses that are expanding and creating new jobs. It provides long term, fixed-rate financing with low down payments to acquire, construct or renovate commercial real estate.

HCDC is a private, non-profit corporation formed in 1983 to promote economic development by participating in the SBA 504 and Ohio Regional 166 Loan Programs. In addition, HCDC developed and operates the Hamilton County Business Center, the largest business incubator in the region and contracts with the Hamilton County Commissioners to administer the Hamilton County Economic Development Office. HCDC ranks 48<sup>th</sup> out of the approximately 300 Certified Development Companies in the U.S. For more information, contact HCDC at 1776 Mentor Avenue, Norwood, OH 45212, (513) 631-8292 or (888) 504-4232 or [www.hcdc.com](http://www.hcdc.com).

### HANCOCK COUNTY TO OVER-SEE SHORT-TERM FLOODING PROJECT

This spring, the Hancock County Commissioners agreed to be responsible for short-term oversight of Blanchard River watershed flood control efforts. In a deadline of June 1 set by the Army Corps of Engineers, Hancock County stepped up to the plate to lead until another entity steps forward. The June deadline coincides with the Army Corps' plan to combine flood studies of the cities of Findlay and Ottawa, county seats of Hancock and Putnam counties, and rural land in between. Combining the studies is necessary to be eligible for more federal financial help with flood control projects. The commissioners agreed to short-term oversight, but set an 18-month deadline for a long-term oversight entity to be chosen.

Undertaking a larger, comprehensive flood study, as the Army Corps intends, requires that a public entity be responsible for finances and land acquisition, duties that the privately-controlled Northwest Ohio Flood Mitigation Partnership has been handling since its inception in 2008. The partnership intends to dissolve around the end of this year.

Money continues to be a major sticking point for flood control efforts. Hancock County is committing a chunk of its sales tax collections, and Findlay is contributing about \$600,000 annually from its income tax. But Putnam County does not have the same resources. Ottawa and Putnam counties plan to redirect their share of \$3 million in state grant money to flood study costs instead of using the money to purchase flood-prone properties, as they initially planned.

### HURON COUNTY FORCE ACCOUNT PROJECTS UPHeld BY SIXTH DISTRICT COURT OF APPEALS

The Sixth District court of Appeals, in the case of (State ex Rel. Renwand v. Huron County Board of Commissioners 2010-Ohio-1477), ruled in favor of the Huron County Engineer and the Huron County Board of Commissioners on the issue of whether three bridge projects individually exceeded the threshold for performing bridge work by force account. Existing law permits the county engineer to perform bridge and road work using his own forces provided the cost of the project including all materials, supplies, equipment, labor and overhead does not exceed certain thresholds established by law. In the case of each bridge project undertaken by the engineer, the commissioners separately bid out a portion of the overall work involving the procurement and installation of pre-stressed concrete beams for each bridge. The appellant court ruled that the portion of the work on the bridges involving the concrete beams was separate from that portion of the work performed by the county engineer as contractor and thus not subject to the force account thresholds. Only that portion of the work specifically included within the engineer's force account project where the engineer works as contractor must be included within the engineer's estimate for purposes of determining whether the work is less than the threshold set by law and thus permissible by force account.

As a court of appeals decision, the case represents the guiding law within the counties of the Sixth Appellate District (Erie, Fulton, Huron, Lucas, Ottawa, Sandusky, Williams and Wood counties) and should be persuasive in other counties as the highest expression of the law by a court in this state. As an appellate court expression on the law, the case would supersede any attorney general or auditor of state opinion to the contrary.

## STATE ACTIVITIES

### STATUE VOTING PROCESS UNDERWAY; VOTE BY JUNE 12

Ohioans will have until **June 12** to cast their ballots to lend support for one of the finalists nominated to represent Ohio in the U.S. Capitol's Statuary Hall. Ballot boxes will be available at 35 of the state's historic sites and museums - including the Statehouse - and residents can also print and mail their ballots in support of one of the nominees. The final contenders for the honor are:

- **James M. Ashley** of Toledo, an abolitionist and U.S. Representative
- **Thomas Edison** of Milan, the inventor who held more than 1,000 patents.
- **Ulysses S. Grant** of Point Pleasant, a Civil War leader who became the nation's 18th president.
- **William McCulloch** of Holmesville, a former U.S. representative who was instrumental in the American civil rights movement.
- **Jesse Owens**, the noted 1936 Olympic champion who dedicated his life in service to youth.
- **Judith Resnik** of Akron, the NASA astronaut who died in the 1986 Challenger shuttle explosion.
- **Albert Sabin** of Cincinnati, who developed an oral polio vaccine.
- **Harriet Beecher Stowe** of Cincinnati, the abolitionist who wrote Uncle Tom's Cabin.
- **Harriet Taylor Upton** of Ravenna, a women's suffrage leader.
- **Orville and Wilbur Wright** of Dayton, leading pioneers in aviation.

The results of the public vote are being given the largest amount of weight in the deliberations of the legislative panel that will make a final recommendation to the General Assembly. Voting will run from March 20 to June 12. Online ballots will be available at [www.legacyforohio.org](http://www.legacyforohio.org).

### MORE THAN 200 APPLY FOR FARMLAND PRESERVATION FUNDS

Ohio farm families and local communities recently submitted applications asking the Ohio Department of Agriculture (ODA) to purchase an easement on their farmland, which would guarantee their land will forever be preserved for agricultural use. The department received 203 applications from 37 counties for the ninth round of funding under the Clean Ohio Agricultural Easement Purchase Program.

An agricultural easement is a voluntary and legally-binding restriction placed on a farm. The easement limits the use of the land to predominantly agricultural activity. The land remains under private ownership and management and stays on the tax rolls under Current Agricultural Use Valuation (CAUV). The farmland can be sold or passed along as a gift to others at any time, but the restriction prohibiting non-agricultural development stays with the land.

The department received applications from families requesting more than 29,000 acres be preserved in the following 37 Ohio counties: Ashland (17), Ashtabula (2), Auglaize (1), Brown (3), Butler (1), Champaign (8), Clark (10), Coshocton (1), Delaware (4), Fairfield (29), Fulton (10), Gallia (3), Geauga (1), Greene (5), Henry (1), Huron (1), Knox (9), Licking (7), Logan (14), Lucas (1), Madison (7), Marion (5), Miami (9), Montgomery (9), Morrow (3), Perry (4), Portage (3), Preble (11), Sandusky (1), Seneca (11), Trumbull (3), Tuscarawas (2), Union (1), Vinton (1), Warren (2), Wayne (2), and Wood (1).

The applications are currently undergoing the first of a two-step scoring process. The first step uses a formula that takes into account various measurable characteristics of the land. The second step includes a review by the Ohio agriculture director's 13-member Farmland Preservation Advisory Board. The advisory board evaluates a set of questions designed to provide further insight into the farm and local farmland protection efforts. Scores from both rounds are combined, and the advisory board presents its recommendations to ODA Director Robert Boggs, former Ashtabula County Commissioner.

Since the program's inception in 2002, the department's farmland preservation office has received more than 2,400 applications. Due to limited funding, the department has been able to preserve only 172 of those farms, totaling 33,460.37 acres in 33 counties. In November 2008, voters approved a \$400 million bond renewal for the Clean Ohio Fund. The Clean Ohio Fund not only helps preserve farmland, but also preserves greenspace, develops recreational trails and cleans up brownfield sites. For more information on the Clean Ohio Fund or the Agricultural Easement Purchase Program, visit [www.agri.ohio.gov](http://www.agri.ohio.gov).

## **FEDERAL ACTIVITIES**

### **HOUSE PASSES SHORTENED EXTENDERS BILL – DROPS FMAP**

On May 28, by a vote of 215 to 204 the House of Representatives passed a shortened tax extenders bill (H.R. 4213). The Senate recessed for the Memorial Day weekend break without taking up the measure. The most significant change for county governments was that in a deal with "Blue Dog" Democrats, the House Democratic leadership dropped the six-month extension of the increased federal support for Medicaid – the federal medical assistance percentage or "FMAP" – which was included in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA). The expiration of the ARRA FMAP assistance at the end of December would put considerable additional strain on state and local budgets already struggling with reduced revenue streams and increased Medicaid rolls due to the long, deep recession. Members of the Blue Dog Coalition refused support for the \$143 billion bill as proposed, because only \$59 billion of it was offset, or paid for by increasing revenues or decreased spending in other programs. The bill still contains a one-year extension of the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) block grant-Emergency Contingency Fund and increased funds for summer youth jobs. The bill also extends the Build America Bonds and Recovery Zone Bonds programs for two years. It provides exemption of interest on tax-exempt private activity bonds from the Alternative Minimum Tax (AMT). It also extends tax-exempt eligibility for loans guaranteed by Federal Home Loan Banks through 2011. The bill provides a one-time capitalization of the National Housing Trust Fund, which would provide \$1 billion in capital funds and also \$65 million for project-based vouchers, to provide rental assistance to extremely low-income persons. The vote was taken up in two parts. The first part included the unemployment insurance extension, tax extenders, TANF and summer youth, among others. The second portion included a 19-month moratorium on the cuts to Medicare doctor payments. The Senate Leadership is planning to take up the measure after June 7 when they return to Washington DC from their Memorial Day District Work Period.

### **FTC EXTENDS ENFORCEMENT DEADLINE FOR IDENTITY THEFT RED FLAGS RULE**

At the request of several Members of Congress, the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) is further delaying enforcement of the "Red Flags" Rule through December 31, 2010, while Congress considers legislation that would affect the scope of entities covered by the Rule.

The Rule was developed under the Fair and Accurate Credit Transactions Act, in which Congress directed the FTC and other agencies to develop regulations requiring "creditors" and "financial institutions" to address the risk of identity theft. The resulting Red Flags Rule requires all such entities that have "covered accounts" to develop and implement written identity theft prevention programs to help identify, detect, and respond to patterns, practices, or specific activities – known as "red flags" – that could indicate identity theft.

The Rule became effective on January 1, 2008, with full compliance for all covered entities originally required by November 1, 2008. The Commission has issued several Enforcement Policies delaying enforcement of the Rule. Most recently, the Commission announced in October 2009 that at the request of certain Members of Congress, it was delaying enforcement of the Rule until June 1, 2010, to allow Congress time to finalize legislation that would limit the scope of business covered by the Rule. Since then, the Commission has received another request from Members of Congress for another delay in enforcement of the Rule beyond June 1, 2010.

If Congress passes legislation limiting the scope of the Red Flags Rule with an effective date earlier than December 31, 2010, the Commission will begin enforcement as of that effective date. In the interim, the FTC has materials posted on [www.ftc.gov/redflagsrule](http://www.ftc.gov/redflagsrule) and published a compliance guide for business and created a template that enables low risk entities to create an identity theft program with an easy-to-use online form ([www.ftc.gov/bcp/edu/microsites/redflagsrule/get-started.shtm](http://www.ftc.gov/bcp/edu/microsites/redflagsrule/get-started.shtm)). For questions regarding this Enforcement Policy, please contact Naomi Lefkowitz or Pavneet Singh, Bureau of Consumer Protection, at (202) 326-2252.

## **PUBLICATIONS**

### OACBHA MONTHLY ONE-PAGER

Attached to this issue of CIDS is the Ohio Association of County Behavioral Health Authorities (OACBHA) monthly one-pager, "Behavioral Health: Developing a Better Understanding." This issue, "Aging, Behavioral Health, and Chronic Disease," focuses on the effects of substance abuse and mental illness and the impact on older adults. Check out OACBHA's new OF-1-MIND website [www.of-1-mind.org](http://www.of-1-mind.org). For more information, contact the Ohio Association of County Behavioral Health Authorities, 33 North High Street - Suite 500, Columbus, OH 43215, (614) 224-1111 or fax (614) 224-2642.

### TAKE ACTION – PROTECT YOURSELF FROM FRAUD

The Ohio Department of Insurance launched "Take Action" Protect Yourself from Fraud," a new initiative to educate consumers about insurance fraud and financial exploitation. Take Action initially will focus on alerting consumers to types of deceptive sales practices and schemes occurring in annuities, living trusts, stranger-oriented life insurance, reverse mortgages, Medicare sales and health care fraud. Take Action also assists Ohioans in safeguarding their online information and warding off unwanted telemarketers and spammers. The Ohio Department of Aging assisted in creation of the Take Action program. A free consumer guide is available at [www.takeaction.ohio.gov](http://www.takeaction.ohio.gov). For additional information on insurance fraud, contact the Ohio Department of Insurance Consumer Hotline at (800) 686-1526.

## **NACo ACTIVITIES**

### NACo 75<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL CONFERENCE & EXPOSITION

The National Association of Counties (NACo) and Washoe County (Reno), Nevada invite you to join over 2,000 appointed and elected officials from across the nation this summer for the anniversary-sized "NACo 75<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference & Exposition" to be held July 16-20 at the Reno/Sparks Convention Center.

Register for the conference and housing online at [www.naco.org](http://www.naco.org) to save \$25 per registrant. Click on the article about the conference on the front page. **The early bird discount expires today!** For more information, please contact Mary Jane Neiman, CCAO Public Relations Associate, at (614) 220-7979, (888) 757-1904 or [mjneiman@ccao.org](mailto:mjneiman@ccao.org).

## CLASSIFIEDS

### ATTORNEY

Licking County Child Support Enforcement Agency has an opening for an Attorney to provides legal representation for the State of Ohio in Child Support Enforcement matters.

Duties: Prepares cases for judicial hearings and/or conducts administrative hearings as hearing officer; conducts legal research and prepares legal briefs, memorandums, correspondence, and pleadings; drafts and reviews agreements and other documents for agency staff; confers with case managers and law enforcement personnel (investigators) to obtain information and provides legal advice; answers child support related legal inquiries; provides legal advice to director, legal coordinator, and agency staff; performs related legal and administrative work and provides backup to other agency attorneys and legal staff as needed.

Application Procedures: Submit completed application, resume and cover letter to the Licking County Human Resources Department, 20 South Second Street, 3rd Floor, Newark, Ohio 43055. Applications can be obtained in person in the Human Resources Department between 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m until daily or printed from the web site at [www.lcounty.com](http://www.lcounty.com). Application deadline: **June 30, 2010**. Successful candidates will be subject to Licking County's pre-employment drug screen and background check. EOE.

#### CLASSIFIED ADS

CCAO publishes the County Information and Data Service (CIDS) weekly. Classified ads will be published free of charge as a service to counties. Ads will run for two weeks if space is available. Ads will also be published on the CCAO website at [www.ccao.org](http://www.ccao.org). When submitting your ad to CCAO please provide a link to the job posting online and a deadline. Please provide a copy of the classified ad by 5:00 p.m. on Wednesday of each week. Transmit the copy to Mary Jane Neiman, CCAO Public Relations Associate, by e-mail at [mjneiman@ccao.org](mailto:mjneiman@ccao.org)



# Behavioral Health: Developing A Better Understanding

Ohio Association of  
COUNTY  
BEHAVIORAL  
HEALTH  
AUTHORITIES

Vol. Six, Issue V

OF  MIND

## AGING, BEHAVIORAL HEALTH, AND CHRONIC DISEASE

The baby boomers are aging and bringing a host of behavioral and physical health problems with them. All human beings experience changes in their bodies as they age, caused by the effects of heredity, environment, cultural influences, diet, exercise, leisure choices, past illnesses, and other factors. The effects of substance abuse and mental illness are two of the factors that impact older adults.

The Ohio Department of Aging defines Golden Buckeye Card eligibility as beginning at age 60. Those “golden” years of age 60 and beyond have traditionally been accepted as a time when people may start to experience health declines. For today’s seniors, however, the onset of physical diseases may be exacerbated by histories of alcohol and other drug use and treatments for depression and other mental illnesses. Do behavioral health illnesses impact physical health? Absolutely. According to a 2006 study, “compared to the general population, persons with major mental illness typically lose more than 25 years of normal life span.”<sup>1</sup>

*“It has been historic and tempting to think of the elderly as a ‘group’...  
(the) emerging view is that differences are more likely to increase with age.”*

*~Robert Denton, Ph.D., Adjunct Professor of Sociology, The University of Akron*

Substance abuse and mental health disease among older adults is associated with poor health outcomes, higher health care utilization, increased complexity of the treatment and outcome of many mental and physical illnesses, increased disability and impairment, poorer quality of life, increased caregiver stress, increased mortality, and higher risk of suicide. The implications of all this can be staggering when considering that one-fifth of the population will be over age 65 by 2030, and one-quarter of the total will be over age 60.<sup>2</sup>

The majority of older adults with substance abuse or mental health problems do not receive the treatment they need, yet emerging science supports the efficacy of a variety of pharmacology and therapeutic interventions for substance abuse problems and major psychiatric disease in older persons. Current prevention services for this population are extremely limited from both a substance abuse and a mental health perspective.

### The Hidden Illness: Aging and Depression

Depression is NOT a natural part of aging. In older people, depression frequently shows up not as sadness but as a constellation of physical complaints—one of several reasons it is frequently overlooked. Bereavement-associated depression may be considered unavoidable as people age, and therefore not treated until it becomes debilitating. To identify possible depression early on, two suggested screening questions for older adults are:

1. Over the past two weeks, have you felt down, depressed, or hopeless?
2. Over the past two weeks, have you felt little interest or pleasure in doing things?

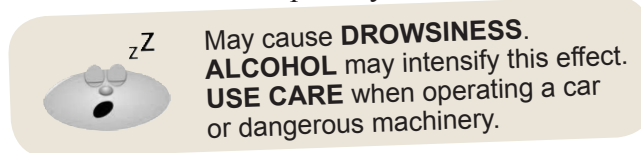
If someone answers “yes” to these two questions, urge them to see a counselor or primary care physician. Ignoring signs and symptoms of depression will not make it go away. The good news is that according to the Surgeon General’s office, even though it may take longer, treatment for depression and depressive symptoms is successful in 60-80% of older adults.

## Alcohol and Aging Not a Safe Mix

In marked contrast to studies of the general population, surveys conducted in health care settings have found increasing prevalence of alcoholism among the older population. Surveys indicate that 6 to 11 percent of elderly patients admitted to hospitals exhibit symptoms of alcoholism, as do 20 percent of elderly patients in psychiatric wards and 14 percent of elderly patients in emergency rooms. In acute-care hospitals, rates of alcohol-related admissions for the elderly are similar to those for heart attacks. Still, hospital staff are significantly less likely to recognize alcoholism in an older patient than in a younger patient.<sup>3</sup> Alcohol's effects on the brain and body include:

- Alcohol slows brain activity causing symptoms that may seem like dementia or Alzheimer's disease.
- Because alcohol affects alertness, judgment, coordination, and reaction time, drinking increases the risk of falls and accidents. The incidence of hip fractures increases with alcohol consumption.
- Some research has shown that it takes less alcohol to affect older than younger people.
- Over time, heavy drinking permanently damages the brain and central nervous system, liver, heart, kidneys, and stomach.
- Alcohol's effects can make some medical problems hard to diagnose. For example, alcohol causes changes in the heart and blood vessels that can dull pain that might be a heart attack warning sign.

In addition, alcohol can make many of the medical conditions common in older people, including high blood pressure and ulcers, more serious. Physical changes associated with aging can make older people feel "high" even after drinking only small amounts of alcohol. So even if there is no medical reason to avoid alcohol, older men and women should limit themselves to one drink per day.



### Mixing in Drugs

Alcohol is often harmful when mixed with prescription or over-the-counter medicines. The average person age 65-plus takes 2-7 medications daily. Alcohol-drug interactions are especially common among the elderly, increasing the risk of negative health impact and changing the effectiveness of medications. Mixing alcohol with other drugs such as tranquilizers, sleeping pills, painkillers, and antihistamines can be dangerous, even fatal.

### Pain Medication and Addiction

Long-term use of opiate-based drugs or depressants can lead to physical dependence and addiction, which is more likely in people under age 26 and over 65. The elderly are also more likely to have chronic diseases like arthritis and back pain. To avoid dependence or addiction, pain medication must be considered a part of treatment that may include physical therapy, exercises, and other treatments for ongoing relief of symptoms.

## Older Adults and Suicide

Research that has helped differentiate mental disease from "normal" aging is one of the more important achievements in geriatric health. However, unrecognized or untreated depression, Alzheimer's disease, alcohol and drug misuse and abuse, anxiety, late-life schizophrenia, and other conditions can be severely impairing, and sometimes deadly. In the United States, the rate of suicide - frequently a consequence of depression - is highest among adults 65 and older compared to all other age groups.

Suicide disproportionately impacts the elderly. In Ohio, 13 percent of completed suicides are among people aged 65 and older. Never ignore a person's mention of suicide. Offer help or call **1-800-273-TALK (8255)**.

### *Treatment Works...People Recover*

**Sources:** <sup>1</sup>The National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors. *Morbidity and Mortality in People with Serious Mental Illness, 2006*  
<sup>2</sup>Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality U.S. Preventive Services Task Force  
<sup>3</sup><http://alcoholism.about.com/cs/alerts/1/blnaa40.htm>  
Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, <http://bit.ly/ccDbZN>  
Office of the Surgeon General    National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism    National Institute on Drug Abuse  
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
Ohio Suicide Prevention Foundation